

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7825

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 7213

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, JA

SUBJECT: YOMIURI STORY ON MIG 25 AND ALLEGED PRESIDENTIAL LETTER

REF: TOKYO 7003

FOLLOWING IS ROUGH EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF YOMIURI
STORY WHICH APPEARED MAY 16 CONCERNING REPORTED
LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD TO THEN PRIME MINISTER
MIKI ABOUT MIG 25. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING
WHETHER SIMILAR STORIES HAVE APPEARED IN U.S. PRESS.
BEGIN TEXT

(WASHINGTON, MAY 14, CORRESPONDENT OIKAWA) A SOURCE VERY CLOSE TO THE
US GOVERNMENT CLARIFIED A NEW FACT ON THE 14TH, IN CONNECTION WITH
THE

MIG-25 INCIDENT OF LAST AUTUMN, WHICH IS SAID TO BE ONE OF THE
CAUSES FOR THE HARD-SAILING AT THE JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS,
TO ZHEFFECT THAT JAPAN AGREED TO THE DISMANTLING OF THE PLANE AND
INVESTIGATIONS BY US MILITARY EXPERTS AS A RESULT OF US PRESIDENT
FORD'S (AT THE TIME) SENDING A PERSONAL LETTER IN TOP SECRECY TO
PRIME MINISTER MIKI (AT THE TIME). ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE,
MIKI'S POLICY AT FIRST WAS TO SEND BACK THE PLANE TO THE SOVIET
UNION AS SOON AS THE POLICE COMPLETED THEIR INVESTIGATION OF THE
ACTUAL SITUATION. IT IS SAID, HOWEVER, THAT PRIME MINISTER
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MIKI DECIDED THAT HE WILL HAVE TO AGREE TO THE DEMAND IN FORD'S
PERSONAL LETTER, EVEN IN ORDER TO REPAY THE "DEBT" OF THE MIKI PERSON
AL
LETTER CONCERNING THE SUPPLY OF DATA ON THE LOCKHEED CASE.
CONCERNING THIS PROBLEM, THE US STATE DEPARTMENT GIVES A
DELICATE EXPLANATION, SAYING: "THE HANDLING OF THE PRESIDENT'S
PERSONAL LETTERS COMES UNDER THE CATEGORY OF SECRET MATTERS, AND WE

CANNOT COMMENT ON IT. AT ANY RATE, WE DO NOT THINK THAT THE MIG INCIDENT IS THE MAJOR CAUSE FOR THE HARD SAILING AT THE JAPAN-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS." HOWEVER, RELATED PERSONS (PLURAL), WHO HAD CONNECTIONS WITH THE US-JAPAN NEGOTIATIONS OVER THIS PROBLEM, AT THE TIME, ALL CONFIRM THE EXISTENCE OF THE PERSONAL FORD LETTER.

ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE CONCERNED, PRESIDENT FORD'S PERSONAL LETTER WAS DELIVERED TO PRIME MINISTER MIKI THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY BY TY US EMBASSY IN JAPAN IN TOKYO, ON SEPTEMBER 8 OR 9, SEVERAL DAYS AFTER TY LANDING OF THE MIG-25 AT HAKODATE AIRPORT (AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 6). IT IS SAID THAT IT HAD UNUSUAL CONTENTS, WHICH INCLUDED CONCRETE DEMANDS, SUCH AS INVESTIGATIONS BY AMERICAN MILITARY EXPERTS AND THE DISMANTLING OF THE PLANE.

IN ADVANCE OF THIS, THE US GOVERNMENT AND US MILITARY AUTHORITIES CONCERNED HAD BEEN MAKING REQUESTS UNOFFICIALLY TO THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, FROM IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ARISING OF THE INCIDENT, THAT IT PERMIT THE INVESTIGATION OF THE PLANE BY THE HANDS OF THE US FORCES. AT THAT STAGE, HOWEVER, JAPAN WAS FOLLOWING THE POLICY OF "EXERCISING CAUTION IN THE HANDLING OF THE AFFAIR, AS THERE IS THE DANGER OF ITS DEVELOPING INTO A COMPLICATED INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM

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KSTATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER MIKI AT A CABINET MEETING ON THE 7TH,) AND IT REJECTED THESE REQUESTS. FOR THIS REASON, PRESIDENT FORD'S PERSONAL LETTER WAS SENT, IN THE MEANING OF PRESSING IT HOME TO JAPAN, IN ORDER TO MAKE IT UNDERSTAND THAT THE US REQUESTS WERE EXTREMELY STRONG. WITH THIS AS A TURNING POINT, JAPAN'S ATTITUDE CHANGED AND MOVED IN THE DIRECTION OF DISMANTLING THE PLANE AND APPROVING INSPECTION BY THE US FORCES.

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THE INSPECTION OF THE PLANE TOOK THE FORM OF "US MILITARY EXPERTS GIVING CO-OPERATION, SUCH AS THE OFFERING OF NECESSARY TECHNIQUES FOR THE SDF'S INVESTIGATIONS, AT THE REQUEST OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT," AS A RESULT OF THE AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN AIR CHIEF OF STAFF TSUNODA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GALLIGAN OF THE US FORCES IN JAPAN, ON SEPTEMBER 18. HOWEVER, IT WAS SAID, EVEN AT THAT TIME, THAT THE ACTUAL SITUATION WAS THE "SDF'S CO-OPERATING IN THE INVESTIGATIONS BY THE US FORCES." AT THAT TIME, THIS SITUATION WAS EXPLAINED AS "DUE TO THE DIFFERENCE IN THE TECHNICAL LEVELS OF US AND JAPANESE EXPERTS." HOWEVER, NOW THAT IT HAS BEEN CLARIFIED THAT THERE WAS THIS PERSONAL LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD, IT CAN BE SAID THAT THE DISMANTLING OF THE PLANE AND THE INSPECTION OF THE PLANE WERE DUE TO THE PRESSURE OF THE US GOVERNMENT, AND THAT THE TSUNODA-GALLIGAN AGREEMENT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A FORMALITY IN PREPAREDNESS FOR THE SOVIET UNION'S PROTEST.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7826

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CONCERNING THE REASONS FOR PRIME MINISTER MIKI, WHO HAD TURNED DOWN THE US REQUEST AT FIRST, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION JAPAN-SOVIET RELATIONS, MAKING A COMPLETE SHIFT AND ACCEDING TO THE DEMANDS OF PRESIDENT FORD'S PERSONAL LETTER, RELATED SOURCES EXPLAIN THAT "THE WAS BECAUSE OF HIS 'DEBT' OVER THE LOCKHEED CASE." IN CONNECTION WITH THE LOCKHEED CASE, THE US SHOWED RELUCTANCE TO THE SUPPLYING OF DATA AT FIRST. HOWEVER, PRIME MINISTER MIKI SENT AN UNUSUAL PERSONAL LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD'S DIRECT REQUEST WOULD BE A MINUS FOR US-JAPAN RELATIONS. HOWEVER, THIS RELATED SOURCE POINTS OUT THE FACT THAT, ON THE OCCASION OF SPECIAL ENVOY SONODA'S VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION SOME TIME AGO, SOVIET PREMIER KOSYGIN REFERRED TO THE MIG-25 INCIDENT, USING THE EXPRESSION "THE UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT," AND TAKES THE VIEW THAT THE "EXCHANGE OF LOCKHEED AND MIG-25" HAS BECOME ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE HARD-SAILING OF THE JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS.

DENIED BY JAPANESE PERSONS CONCERNED

RELATED SOURCES IN TOKYO ALL DENY THE STORY OF A PERSONAL LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD, WHICH IS SAID TO HAVE DEMARDED THE DISMANTLING AND THE INSPECTION OF THE MIG-25 BY THE US FORCES. THE GENERALLY PREVAILING VIEW IS THAT IF THE US WANTED TO MAKE SUCH DEMANDS, IT NEED NOT HAVE GONE TO THE TROUBLE OF SENDING THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL LETTER, AND THE MAKING OF SUCH DEMANDS THROUGH THE US
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FORCES OR THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WOULD HAVE BEEN FULLY SUFFICIENT.

FORMER PRIME MINISTER MIKI, WHO IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE RECEIVED THE PERSONNEL LETTER, FLATLY DENIES IT, SAYING: "SUCH A THING CERTAINLY DID NOT COME. THERE IS NO REASON FOR SUCH A THING TO COME." KIICHI MIYAZAWA, WHO WAS THE FOREIGN MINISTER AT THE TIME OF THE ARISING OF THE INCIDENT, ALSO SAYS: "IT HAVE NOT HEARD OF ANY PERSONAL LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD. I AM HEARING IF FOR THE FIRST TIME." HE FURTHER EXPLAINED THE SITUATION AT THE TIME, SAYING AS FOLLOWS:

"ON THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 6, THE DAY THAT THE MIG-25 LANDED, I CALLED TOGETHER THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S VICE MINISTER AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS CONCERNED, AND CONFIRMED THE FOLLOWING BASIC POLICY: 'IT IS A MATTER OF COURSE FOR JAPAN TO INVESTIGATE THE PLANE. HOWEVER, IF THERE ARE ASPECTS IN REGARD TO EXPERTS AND MATERIALS WHICH CANNOT BE HANDLED BY JAPAN ALONE, THEN WE WILL BORROW THEM FROM THE US. EVEN IN THAT CASE, HOWEVER, WE WILL BORROW THEM ON A CONTRACT BASIS, SO TO SPEAK, AND IT WILL BE CARRIED OUT TO THE LAST ON JAPAN'S RESPONSIBILITY.' I ALSO NOTIFIED THE JDA TO THIS EFFECT, YOU CAN FIND THIS OUT IMMEDIATELY, IF YOU ASK THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS CONCERNED.

"AT THE TIME, IT WAS REPORTED IN SOME CIRCLES AS IF THE ATTITUDE OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT WAS WAVERING. HOWEVER, THE POLICY WAS ALREADY FIRMLY DECIDED ON SEPTEMBER 6, AND THERE WAS NO SITUATION ANYWHERE AT ALL WHERE IT WOULD BECOME NECESSARY TO RECEIVE A PERSONAL LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD."

THE THEN JDA DIRECTOR GENERAL MICHITA SAKATA ALSO SAID: "FROM RIGHT AFTER THE LANDING OF THE MIG, VARIUS REPRESENTATIONS WERE MADE BY THE US, SUCH AS THAT 'THAT IS A VALUABLE THING.' IT SAID MANY THINGS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE JDA, BY TELEPHONE AND ORALLY, HOWEVER, THAT WAS A MATTER OF COURSE FROM BEFORE, AND THERE WAS NO REASON FOR IT TO BECOME SUCH A BIG THING AS UNCLASSIFIED

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A PERSONAL LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD."

MEANWHILE, A US EMBASSY SOURCE IN JAPAN ALSO SAID: "NO MEMBER OF THE US EMBASSY IN JAPAN KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT SUCH A PERSONAL LETTER, AND OUR HANDING IT OVER TO THE JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTRY IS ALSO NOT TRUE."

OF COURSE, IF THERE HAD BEEN A PERSONAL LETTER, WHICH HAD THE REPORTED CONTENTS, IT WOULD BE DIFFERENT FROM FORMER PRIME MINISTER MIKI'S PERSONAL LETTER ON THE LOCKHEED CASE, WHICH RATHER HAD VALUE AS A MATERIAL FOR INTERNAL PROPAGANDA, AND SUCH A PERSONAL LETTER WOULD BE TREATED COMPLETELY AS A TOP SECRET. CONSEQUENTLY,

THERE ARE SOME GOVERNMENT-RELATED SOURCES WHO USE EXPRESSIONS
WHICH CONTAIN IMPLICATIONS, SUCH AS THAT "THE TRUTH WILL PROBABLY
NOT BE MADE CLEAR UNTIL 30 YEARS FROM NOW, WHEN DIPLOMATIC
DOCUMENTS ARE MADE PUBLIC." END TEXT.
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